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FACTS ABOUT MOUNT OLIVE HOMESTEADS

Department of Agriculture
Farm Security Administration

OFFICIAL NAME:	Mount Olive Homesteads
LOCATION:	In Jefferson County, north-central Alabama, 13 miles from the business section of Birmingham.
HISTORY OF PROJECT:	Initiated by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads of the Department of Interior. Transferred to the Resettlement Administration by Executive Order, May 15, 1935. Construction started in January, 1936.
PURPOSE OF PROJECT:	To provide subsistence homesteads for low-income families dependent upon part-time or full-time employment in the industries and trades of Birmingham and vicinity. The project will give the families an opportunity to supplement their real income by raising most of their food supplies.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	This subsistence homestead project totals 513 acres and has 75 farms. Farms range from 3 to 10 acres, but tracts average 3 acres. The land is rolling and a good portion is smooth for cultivation and suitable for the rotation of crops. Families raise chickens, keep a dairy cow, produce garden crops, and some are also raising pigs. A community center, including a school, is planned and a community store is under consideration.
HOUSE DESCRIPTION:	The houses of 4, 5 and 6 rooms have all been completed and 59 families were in occupancy by May 15, 1937. Of the houses, 7 are rammed earth houses, the other 68, brick veneer. Each homestead has a combination garage, barn, chicken house, and store room. Telephone service is available, and electricity is furnished by a private utility. Water is supplied by individual wells with electric pressure pumps. Each homestead has a septic tank and a tile disposal field. Walks and driveways, roads, bridges and culverts have also been completed.

HOMESTEADERS: More than 70 percent of the family heads at Mount Olive Homesteads were born in Alabama. The rest came from 11 other states and one foreign country. There were 149 children on the project as of March 1, 1938; more than half of them under 9 years of age. The majority of the men are between 31 and 40 years of age; and the majority of women, between 26 and 35 years of age. Thirty-four of the husbands and wives completed grade school; 33 completed high school, and 5, college. The homesteaders have generally either lived or worked on a farm. Twenty-eight of the homesteaders are skilled workers; 18 are semi-skilled, 18 were engaged in professional, administrative or clerical work, and 9 were salespersons. Previous to application for a homestead, 54 of the families had an income between $1,100 and $1,899. Twelve families made over $1,900 and 8 made less than $1,000.